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ABSTRACT

This evaluation report describes the implementation and results of the 1979-80 Transitional Class Program. Although the program no longer exists as a centrally-coordinated effort, it serves as a final summary of the program's two years of operation by comparing the results from one year (1978-1979) to the next (1979-1980), and provides guidance to educators engaged in developing programs with similar objectives. Among the issues addressed in this report are the following: (1) to what extent can central administrators set policy for programs implemented in a decentralized school system?; (2) if policy can be made centrally, what problems are encountered and how might they be overcome?; (3) what are reasonable expectations for programs designed to support and foster the educational growth of underachieving children?; and (4) what are the basic, common components of programs aimed at meeting the special instructional needs of low-achieving pupils throughout the New York City public schools? The report is organized into five sections: Program Background, Description of the Program, Program Assessment, Further Study of 45 Classes, and Evaluation Comments and Recommendations. (Author/GK)

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OEE Evaluation Report

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EVALUATION REPORT

TRANSITIONAL CLASS PROGRAM

1979-1980

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TRANSITIONAL CLASS PROGRAM

SEPTEMBER, 1979 - JUNE, 1980

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PREFACE

This evaluation report describes the implementation and results of the 1979-1980 Transitional Class Program. Since the program no longer exists as a centrally-coordinated effort, the report also serves as a final summary of the program's two years of operation by comparing the results from one year (1978-1979) to the next (1979-1980).

The purpose of reporting the evaluation of an educational program that no longer exists is not only to reflect on the past but also to provide guidance to educators engaged in developing programs with similar objectives. In fact, we suspect that there is much information in this report that is relevant to the development of any program for students with special instructional needs. While few of the findings will come as a surprise to the educational community, they should alert us again to many aspects of planning and implementation that can effect program outcomes.

The purposes of this evaluation report are various: to describe the intentions of the 1979-1980 Transitional Class Program in terms of the guidelines and objectives established by the program's administrators; to examine how well the program's implementation actually matched those intentions; to determine whether and to what degree the program succeeded in meeting the stated objectives; to assess the suitability of the program's structure to support the achievement of program goals; and to explore the effect of a variety of classroom practices on program success. Among the issues addressed in this report are the following:

--To what extent can central administrators set policy for programs implemented in a decentralized school system?

--If policy can be made centrally, what problems are encountered and how might they be overcome; for example, what type of monitoring is reasonble and neccesary to ensure that programs are implemented according to guidelines?

--What are reasonable expectations for programs designed to support and foster the educational growth of children who have fallen far behind their peers, and how can this educational growth be measured?

--What are the basic, common components of programs aimed at meeting the special instructional needs of low-achieving pupils throughout the New York City public schools?

As a result of incomplete testing and reporting, achievement data for 100 percent of the pupils in transitional classes were not available. It is quite likely that more complete data would have permitted even stronger statements about the efficacy of this program than are possible under the present conditions. Nonetheless, on the basis of data that were obtained, we do conclude that the 1979-1980 Transitional Class Program fostered pupil growth in adjustment to school and ability to read.

The rate of attendance is a reasonably good indicator of pupil adjustment to school. The reported 86 percent attendance rate (probably an underestimate because of problems in data collection) for transitional class pupils is higher than one would expect for holdover (or potential holdover) pupils in the early grades. In fact, the transitional class attendance rates of 86 percent for second grade pupils and 88 percent for third grade grade pupils are comparable to those of non-holdover pupils in these grades throughout the city.

Pupil attentiveness to instruction is another good indicator of adjustment to school. This indicator was measured in a sub-study of 45 transitional classes. Ninety percent of the pupils in these classes

were observed attending to instruction throughout the study. This is a high rate of pupil attentiveness and an important indication of the program's success.

The mean reading gains of eight months for second-grade transitional class pupils and nine months for third-grade transitional class pupils represent 1.00 and 1.12 months of progress per month of instruction, a noteworthy increase in the rates of achievement for these pupils compared to their past performance.

Although our conclusion about the efficacy of the Transitional Class Program must be qualified because of limitations in the data available to us, it does seem unmistakably clear that sound guidelines were established for the program's implementation. These guidelines were not, however, uniformly followed throughout the program. A substantial number of transitional class teachers did not have the requisite years of experience specified by the teacher selection criteria. Some pupils were placed in the program despite firm guidelines which should have prohibited their inclusion. Whole group instruction and the basal reader/phonics approach to reading were prevalent in the transitional classrooms observed in spite of program guidelines and staff development efforts meant to support alternative teaching strategies.

The discrepancies between Transitional Class Program guidelines and implementation which were uncovered by this evaluation lead us to make a series of recommendations pertinent to the development of future programs for students with similar needs. These recommendations include:

--An adequate period for program development during which the parameters of a model (or acceptable alternative models) are established.

--Clear delineation of all responsibilities and their assignment to program participants.

--Pre- and post-assessment of all pupils for the purpose of measuring progress toward the attainment of all salient program objectives.

--Establishment of clear and realistic expectations for pupil performance based on program objectives and pre-assessment of pupils.

--Staff development to ensure that all program participants understand and can implement the program model or models.

--Intensive monitoring to ensure that the program is implemented in conformance with guidelines.

--Systematic collection, analysis, and review of data for the purpose of making informed decisions about program modification.

* *

This report is organized into five sections. Section I, "Program Background", briefly describes the events leading to operation of the 1979-1980 Transitional Class Program. Section II, "Description of the Program", not only describes the 1979-1980 program in detail but also delineates the development of the program from 1978-1979 through 1979-1980. Section III, "Program Assessment", presents the outcomes of the program in 1979-1980 and compares these findings to 1978-1979 results. Section IV, "Further Study of 45 Classes", describes 45 transitional classes in considerable detail and suggests aspects of program implementation that may contribute to or detract from success. Section V, "Evaluation Comments and Recommendations", summarizes the evaluation findings and suggests issues that should be addressed and measures that should be taken to ensure the success of centrally-organized programs for groups of pupils with special instructional needs throughout the New York City public schools.

Grateful acknowledgement is due to the central administrators, particularly to Laura Schneider, the Transitional Class Program Coordinator, and to district administrators for their cooperation in the collection of data which comprise the basis of this report. Thanks are also due to the Transitional Class principals and teachers who participated and assisted in the data collection effort. Finally, special appreciation is extended to Prudence Opperman who assumed the major responsibility for the conduct of this evaluation.

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Office of Educational Evaluation

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I. PROGRAM BACKGROUND

It has been the experience of the New York City school system and of other school systems in large urban areas that pupils who are not doing well academically in the early grades continue having difficulty as they move on in school and fall further and further behind their more successful classmates. After repeated failure, these pupils become increasingly discouraged; they become absentees, truants and, finally, dropouts from the educational process.

The New York City public school system, as other large urban school systems, has attempted to provide for the needs of these less successful primary grade pupils through one of two basic responses, neither of which has been effective. One response has been to "hold-over" these pupils; that is, make them repeat the curriculum they failed to master, generally presented through the same methodology that was not helpful to them the previous year. It has been found, in general, that pupils do not profit academically from this experience and that they suffer psychologically from this removal from their peer-group. The other basic response has been "social promotion"; whereby these pupils have been promoted along with their more successful classmates. Under this treatment, low-achieving pupils faced a curriculum for which they were not prepared. To ameliorate this problem, these less successful pupils, where possible, have been "pulled-out" from their classrooms for remedial help in reading and, possibly, in mathematics. Again, experience has demonstrated that these pupils do not profit from this treatment and continue to fall behind academically.

Given the lack of effectiveness of these responses, the problem for the New York City public schools and other large urban systems is to design a more effective approach to the needs of pupils who are not experiencing success in their early school years. The Transitional Class Program represents such an effort. The basic concept of this program was that these pupils could profit from removal to a special environment for a limited period of time. In this environment, the pupils' learning problems could be determined and ameliorated so that the pupils could then profitably return to regular classes and continue to make reasonable progress in future years.

This report addresses two basic questions about the Transitional Class Program: Did the New York City central administrators design and implement an effective alternative for these pupils? What can be learned from this experience which will be useful in designing and implementing programs for special groups of pupils in the future?

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM

Program Guidelines for 1978-1979

In the fall of 1978, the Chancellor announced a program of "transitional classes", intended for pupils held over in grades one, two and three. Transitional classes were instituted in 1978-1979 to provide a focussed environment solely aimed at fostering academic growth and adjustment of primary-grade children who were having difficulty in meeting the demands of the standard curriculum. The program's central features were a significant reduction of class size (from 32 to 15-20) and a commitment to improve the academic skills and self-concept of the pupils being served so that they could profitably return to mainstream classes by the end of the school year.

A small central office was established to coordinate the Transitional Class Program. Each community school superintendent was asked to appoint a liaison who would serve on a part-time basis to faciliate communication between the central office, the districts and the schools. Teachers were to be selected on the basis of successful experience in teaching slow learners and provision was made for strengthening teachers' skills through monthly training sessions. Also provided were support services aimed at involving parents in their children's educational experience. In addition, a unit was established in the Office of Educational Evaluation to collect data and report on the progress of the program.

Program Guidelines for 1979-1980

Guidelines for the Transitional Class Program for 1979-1980 were developed during the summer of 1979. To a large extent, 1979-1980 guidelines reflected the suggestions for program strengthening which had been

received from program participants and the Transitional Class Evaluation Unit during 1978-1979. The guidelines again described the pupils who were to be admitted to the program and the class size, the teachers to be selected, the role of the district liaison, and the services that would be provided by the central office. The guidelines also stated the following goals for the pupils in the program: development of comprehension skills with a stress on critical thinking and problem solving abilities, ability to follow directions and work independently, ability to experience reading as a pleasureable activity, progress in reading and mathematics, and development of a positive self-concept.

Number and Composition of Transitional Classes

During the 1978-1979 school year, 489 transitional classes, serving approximately 8,000 pupils, were created in 358 schools. The allocations of classes were given to districts on a formula basis, dependent on the number of first, second and third-grade pupils held over in the districts at the end of the 1977-1978 school year. The districts distributed the classes to individual schools based on the number of holdovers in each school. The school principals decided which grades were to be served by the transitional classes.

In 1979-1980, the number of transitional classes was reduced to 391. These classes served 7,425 pupils in 313 schools. As in 1978-1979, allocations were given to districts on a formula basis. (Table 1) and classes were to consist of 15 to 20 pupils (Table 2).

The districts allocated classes to the schools. Of the 313 schools which were allocated transitional classes, 253 were given one transitional class, 46 were given two transitional classes, 12 schools were given three classes and two schools were given five classes.

TABLE 1

Distribution of Transitional Classes by District, 1979-1980

District	1978-1979	1979-1980
1	11	13
2	5	7
3	9	5
4	7	8
5	15	11
6	12	10
7	13	11
8	21	15
9	34	25
10	23	14
11	17	17
12	14	12
13	19	11
14	21	18
15	31	22
16	10	8
17	37	19
18	8	5
19	16	17
20	13	10
21	15	11
22	12	10
23	20	12
24	10	13
25	8	10
26	2	0
27	21	23
28	15	11
29	16	12
30	15	11
31	10	8
32	12	12
	492	391

TABLE 2

Distribution of Class Sizes, 1979 - 1980 *	
Class Size	Number of Classes
Under 12 pupils	5
12 - 14 pupils	50
15 - 17 pupils	168
18 - 20 pupils	153
Over 20 pupils	15
Total	391

*As determined by number of students on register as of November 15, 1979.

Generally, the principals determined the specific grade level or levels of the transitional classes; however, 63 principals stated that the class grade level was established by the district.

The suggested minimum class size of 15 pupils proved to be a major factor in decisions about class composition. Since many schools did not have 15 holdovers on any one grade, some schools solved the problem by including in these classes potential holdovers or children who had previously been held over. In 1978-1979, 82% of the transitional class pupils were current holdovers, 17% were potential holdovers and 1% of the pupils had been held over during a year prior to their year in a transitional class. In 1979-1980, the proportion of current holdovers (85%) was slightly higher (Table 3) and was in closer conformance with program policy which allowed two or three potential holdovers per class.

TABLE 3

Admission Status Of Transitional Class Pupils, 1979-1980				
	Current Holdovers	Potential Holdovers	Previous Holdovers	Total
Number of Pupils	6106	774	308	7188*
Percentages of Pupils	85%	11%	4%	100%

*Information on admission status was not supplied for 237 pupils.

The proportion of current holdovers in transitional classes, however, varied by district from 100% to 41%. While most districts were in compliance with program guidelines, less than 50% of the pupils in three districts were holdovers. These districts were among those which opposed the establishment of multi-grade classes and which established mostly single-grade classes in their schools.

In other schools, combined-grade classes were established where single-grade classes of 15 to 20 holdovers could not be formed. In 1978-1979, half of the transitional classes were combined-grade classes. Although several district liaisons recommended the reduction or elimination of combined-grade classes, the proportion of combined-grade classes remained about the same in 1979-1980; however, the number of classes in which three grades were combined was reduced. (See Table 4.)

TABLE 4

Grade Levels Of Transitional Classes, 1978-1979 and 1979-1980					
No. Of Single-Grade Classes			No. of Combined-Grade Classes		
Grade	1978-1979	1979-1980	Grade	1978-1979	1979-1980
1	60	72	1, 2 3	40	22
2	94	51	1, 2	95	109
3	86	65	2, 3	93	63
			Other Combination*	15	0
Totals	240	188	Totals	243	203
Percentage	50%	48%		50%	52%

*Other Combinations were Kg,1; 1,3; 2,3,4; and 3,4.

There was a noticeable shift, which can be observed in both Table 4 and Table 5, toward classes which included first-grade pupils. In several districts, this shift was the result of district policy. The explanation for this shift, given by principals, was the desire to forestall future problems as well as to remediate existing problems.

TABLE 5

Grade Level of Transitional Class Pupils, 1979 - 1980		
Grade Level	Number of Pupils 1978-1979	Number of Pupils 1979-1980
Kg	0 (0%)	3 (0%)
1	1,798 (24%)	2,669 (36%)
2	3,263 (44%)	2,521 (34%)
3	2,180 (30%)	2,115 (29%)
4	53 (1%)	25** (0%)
5	16 (0%)	0 (0%)
Missing Data	70 (1%)	92 (1%)
Totals	7,380 (100%)	7,425 (100%)

*Based on class rosters and updates supplied by schools, 1979-1980.
**Classes with fourth-grade pupils in 1979-1980 were funded by districts.

Pupil Characteristics

Pupil Selection. Teachers reported that pupils were selected for placement in transitional classes primarily because of low achievement levels. In 1979-1980, 79% of the transitional class pupils were placed in the classes because their reading achievement levels were substantially below grade level. These placements were either based on June, 1979, city-wide California Achievement Test scores for second and third-grade pupils who had been tested, or on teachers' and principals' judgments that the pupils could not handle grade-level reading material. Lack of readiness for further instruction, the second most frequently reported reason for selection into the program, was given for many first-grade and the three kindergarten pupils. (See Table 6).

TABLE 6

Reason Given For Pupil Placement In Transitional Class, 1979-1980

Reason Given	Number of Pupils	Percent of Pupils
Reading below grade level	5848	79%
Lack of academic readiness	608	8%
Excessive absences	170	2%
Poor English language skills	122	2%
No prior school attendance	5	0%
Parent request	3	0%
Awaiting special education placemnt	6	0%
Reason not given	663	9%

Pupil Mobility. Interviews with 125 transitional class teachers in 1978-1979 indicated that there were significant changes in class composition throughout the year as students transferred in and out. In 1979-1980, 9% of the transitional class pupils were admitted after October 31, 1979, and 21% of the pupils, for whom discharge information was reported, were discharged prior to April 31, 1980. (See Table 7.)

TABLE 7

Admissions To Program, 1979-1980		
Admissions	Number of Pupils	Percentage of Pupils
Prior to Oct. 31, 1979	6728	91%
After Oct. 31, 1979	697	9%
Total	7425	100%
Discharges From Program*, 1979-1980		
Discharges	Number of Pupils Reported	Percentage of Pupils Reported
Prior to April 31, 1979	985	21%
After April 31, 1979	3660	79%
Total Number Reported Discharged	4645	100%

*Data on discharge dates were not supplied by teachers for 2780 pupils. Since reporting on discharges fell off markedly at the end of the year, it is probable that most of these 2780 pupils completed the year in the transitional class. If this assumption is correct, then the percentage of pupils who completed the year would be approximately 87%.

Primary Language. In 1978-1979, English was the primary (first) language of 84% of the pupils for whom this information was reported, Spanish was the primary language of 14%, and a variety of other languages were reported as the primary language of 2% of the transitional class pupils. In 1979-1980, English was reported to be the primary language of a smaller proportion (61%) of the pupils and Spanish was reported as the primary language of a larger proportion (33%). (See Table 8.)

TABLE 8

Primary Language Of Transitional Class Pupils, 1979 - 1980		
Language	Number of Pupils	Percent of Pupils
English	4263	61%
Spanish	2319	33%
Other	395	6%
Total	6977*	100%

*Primary (first) language was not reported for 448 pupils.

Sex. Data on sex was reported for 7317 of the 1979-1980 pupils. Of these 7317 pupils, 4437 (61%) were boys and 2880 (39%) were girls. These data are comparable to data on a random sample of transitional class pupils in 1978-1979 which indicated that 60% of the pupils were boys and 40% were girls. These data are also consistent with child development research in which more boys than girls are almost invariably found at both ends of any given distribution.

Teacher Selection

Transitional Class Program guidelines stated that the teachers selected for this position should have demonstrated success in working with slow learners, demonstrated flexibility in classroom management, have at least three year's experience in teaching early childhood grades, have knowledge of a variety of teaching resources, have encouraged parent involvement and should be willing to participate in staff development. Program administrators also suggested that teachers be consulted in the selection process since teacher willingness to work with a special population is considered an important factor in program success.

As part of the guidelines for the 1979-1980 program, principals were asked to submit a teacher selection form for each teacher in the program. This form was submitted for 379 of the 391 teachers. The number of years the teacher had taught in the schools was reported for 318 teachers. Of these, 250 teachers (79%) had taught in the school for three or more years, 52 teachers (16%) had taught in the school for one or two years and 16 teachers (5%) were newly appointed to the school. The number of years the teacher had taught early childhood classes was reported for 265 teachers. Of these 265 teachers, 205 (77%) met the guidelines,

having taught early childhood classes for three or more years. Additionally, when the definition of relevant teaching experience is expanded to include teaching of reading and special education, 84% of the teachers appear to meet the guidelines for the position in terms of teaching experience. (See Table 9.)

TABLE 9

Years Of Relevant Teaching Experience Of 265 Teachers, 1979-1980			
0 to 2 years	3 to 5 year	6 to 10 years	11 or more years
44 (16%)	57 (22%)	66 (25%)	98 (37%)

The principals uniformly gave the teachers high ratings on their prior success with slow learners, flexibility in classroom management, knowledge of teaching resources, encouragement of parent involvement and willingness to participate in workshops. Principals, reporting on the process of selection for 338 teachers, said that 222 teachers (66%) were consulted in the selection process.

Parent Involvement

In 1979-1980, teachers were assigned the responsibility for contact with parents. Teachers were asked to hold an initial parent orientation meeting and bi-monthly individual parent-teacher conferences, and to submit records documenting these meetings. Records of orientation meetings, submitted by 277 of the 391 teachers (71%), reveal an average attendance of six parents per class at these meetings. Forty-nine teachers reported holding additional parent meetings. Documentation of parent-teacher conferences was submitted by 193 teachers (49%). The average

number of parent conferences reported held by these 193 teachers was 28, or one to two conferences per pupil per year.

Program Administration

Central Administration. Because of the decentralized nature of the program, only a small central office was established to serve as an organizational unit linking the Livingston Street headquarters and the districts. In 1979-1980, the Program Co-ordinator, with secretarial assistance, held monthly meetings with district liaisons, prepared and distributed program materials, published two quarterly publications ("EXCHANGES" for teachers and "HOME WORKS" for parents), made arrangements for support services and organized workshops for districts upon request.

District Level Administration. Each of the superintendents of the 31 districts which participated in the program assigned a district administrator to serve as the liaison for this program. These district liaisons were responsible in 1979-1980 for attending district liaison meetings at central headquarters, transmitting communications between the central office and the schools in their districts, holding district meetings with principals of schools with transitional classes, organizing and conducting district meetings with teachers for staff development, and visiting the classrooms in their districts to assist the teachers in implementing the program. As in 1978-1979, the district liaisons held other responsibilities in the districts. In 1979-1980, 14 liaisons were also the early childhood co-ordinators in their districts, 9 were reading co-ordinators, and 7 had other administrative responsibilities. Only one liaison was assigned to this position full-time. Twenty-four of the dis-

trict liaisons were filling this role for the second year; eight of these 25 reported that they were carrying increased responsibilities in 1979-1980 compared to 1978-1979.

Overall, the district liaisons were diligent in carrying out their responsibilities. Thirty of the liaisons regularly attended the meetings at central headquarters; only one district liaison never attended meetings. With the exception of the end-of-year reporting on pupil attendance and discharge, 29 of the liaisons were very successful in transmitting communications from the central office to the schools and back. However, only 13 liaisons collected and submitted end-of-year data from all transitional classes in their districts, 14 submitted data from some classes in their districts and four liaisons did not submit any end-of-year data from their districts. Principals' meetings at the beginning of the year were documented by 16 liaisons and documentation of classroom visits was provided by 18 liaisons. According to the records provided, the number of visits to transitional classrooms during the year ranged from one to ten per class for the liaisons with other responsibilities. The liaison with full-time responsibility for the program visited transitional classes on a daily basis.

In 1979-1980, the district liaisons were assigned the responsibility for staff development. Thirty liaisons reported holding initial staff development meetings; 16 of these liaisons reported additional monthly meetings throughout the year and eight reported bi-monthly meetings. The district liaison with full-time responsibility met with teachers individually. One liaison reported that no staff development was conducted. Of the 27 liaisons who held staff development meetings, 22 re-

ported the objectives of the meeting. According to this documentation, 54% of the meeting were directed to implementing stated program objectives of pupil progress in reading and mathematics, development of critical thinking and problem solving abilities, and development of a positive self-concept. Other objectives of meetings reported by district liaisons were: enhancing teachers' ability to organize and control the classroom, extending teachers' knowledge of useful special-education techniques and extending teachers' abilities in curriculum areas not emphasized by the program.

III. PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

The stated goals of 1979-1980 program included pupils' development of ability to think critically and to solve problems, progress in reading and in mathematics, and development of positive self-concept. A number of measures which are frequently used in research of this type were suggested to assess pupil progress on these objectives but these measures were judged too sensitive to be employed. Therefore, athough transitional class teachers were given materials with which to pre-assess their pupils on these objectives, only attendance data, reading achievement data as measured by the city-wide California Achievement Tests, and some information on pupil placement at the end of the year were utilized as measures of the development of pupils across the program. Attendance data from 1979-1980 were collected at the end of the year from teachers; scores on the June, 1979, and the April, 1980, city-wide California Achievement Tests were extracted from Central Board, district and school records; and information on pupil placement at discharge was also collected from teachers.

Attendance

Attendance, 1978-1979. The 1978-1979 attendance rate for a sample of first, second and third-grade transitional class pupils mid-year was 88%. The attendance rate for a sample of third-grade transitional class pupils at the end of that year was 90%, the same rate as that which was reported for all third-grade pupils city-wide for 1978-1979.

Attendance, 1979-1980. The attendance rate of 86% for 1979-1980 transitional class pupils is based on records provided by teachers for 4,442 pupils (60% of the total number of pupils enrolled in the program). The breakdown of attendance rate by grade level (Table 10) demonstrates the

expected improvement in attendance by ascending grade level for first, second and third grade pupils; and attendance rates by grade level were comparable to those of 1978-1979. Attendance varied by district from high rate of 92% to a low rate of 60%. In addition, it was noted that the attendance rate of pupils who were on register throughout the year (admitted prior to Oct. 31, 1979 and discharged after April 31, 1980) was 88%, a substantially higher rate than the 79% of pupils who were admitted later and/or discharged earlier. (See Table 11.)

TABLE 10

Attendance by Grade Level, 1979-1980

Grade	Number of Pupils	Attendance Rate
Kg	3	92%
1	1540	83%
2	1445	86%
3	1382	88%
4	23	93%
grade level not reported	49	80%
Total Average	4442	86%

TABLE 11

Attendance by Stability/Mobility, 1979-1980

Stability/Mobility	Number of Pupils	Attendance Rate
Stable *	3420	88%
Mobile **	993	79%
Total ***	4413	86%

*"Stable"denotes pupils who were on register prior to October 31, 1979, after April 31, 1980.

**"Mobile" denotes pupils who were admitted later than October 31, 1979, and/or discharged prior to April 31, 1980.

***Attendance data and dates of admission and discharge were provided for 4413 pupils (59% of the pupils enrolled in the program).

Since the major loss of attendance data was the result of the failure of several districts to provide this information for pupils who attended through June, 1980, and since "mobile" pupils had a lower attendance rate than "stable" pupils, it appears likely that the average attendance rate reported (86%) is somewhat lower than the actual rate. In any case, the attendance rates which have been reported here are in line with the attendance rates for pupils throughout the city that were reported by the Metropolitan Educational Laboratory in its annual Pupils' Attendance Report, 1978-1979, and are important indicators of program success.

Reading Test Scores

Reading Test Scores, 1978-1979. In 1978-1979, pre- and post-test scores on the city-wide California Achievement Test were obtained for 40% of the second-grade and 50% of the third-grade transitional class pupils. The mean score of the second grade pupils was 1.4 on the test given in March, 1978, and 2.3 on the test given in June, 1979-- a mean gain of 9 months over 13 months of instruction. The mean score of the third-grade pupils was 1.8 on the test given in March, 1978, and 2.8 on the test given in June, 1980-- a mean gain of 10 months over 13 months of instruction.

Reading Test Scores, 1979-1980. The percentage of second- and third-grade pupils with both pre- and post-test scores increased slightly in 1979-1980 from 47% to 50% for second grade pupils and from 50% to 58% for third-grade pupils (Table 12). The loss of data resulted from: 1) discharge of pupils from the program prior to the date of the post-test, 2) pupil absence on the days the pre-and post-tests were given and 3) the excusing of pupils from the pre- and post-tests because of lack of ability to speak English or because the pupils had been identified as needing

special education services.* It can be inferred that there is some difference between pupils who did and pupils who did not take the tests and, therefore, this loss of data results in a questionable data base on which to calculate "gain". Moreover, the entire first grade (2,669 transitional class pupils) was not tested city-wide** and, therefore, the percentage of children providing the data base for the program on this measure is only 34%.

TABLE 12

Second and Third Grade Transitional Class Pupils with Pre-and Post-test Scores On City-wide Tests, 1979-1980

Grade	Pupils in Program	Pupils with Pre-test Scores, June, 1979	Pupils with Post-test Scores, April, 1980	Pupils with Pre- and Post test Scores
2	2,521	1,889 (75%)	1,520 (60%)	1,253 (50%)
3	2,115	1,820 (86%)	1,340 (63%)	1,221 (58%)

The 1979-1980 mean post-test scores of 2.3 for second grade and 2.9 for third grade were almost identical to the 2.3 and 2.8 mean post-test scores of 1978-1979 second-and third-grade transitional class pupils

*The pre-test was given in June, 1979. A make-up pre-test was given in September, 1979. Nevertheless, 25% of second-grade pupils and 14% of third-grade pupils did not take the pre-test. The post-test data, adjusted for mobility (number of pupils on register, April, 1980) reveals that 31% of second-grade pupils on register and 27% third-grade pupils on register did not take the post-test. Even when adjusted for absence on the day of the test, more than 10% of second and third-grade pupils appear to have been excused from the post-test.

**First-grade pupils are not tested city-wide because: 1) the validity of standardized reading tests at this level is questionable, 2) readiness tests project ability to learn from specific materials rather than measure achievement and 3) many first-grade pupils are considered not mature enough to be testable.

(See Table 13). The mean gain of 8 and 9 months over 8 months of instruction indicates a notable increase in the rates of progress over 1978-1979 (Table 14) and, it appears, a noteworthy increase in the rate of progress of these pupils over their past performance. However, conclusions about the data must be qualified due to problems of regession to the mean; of reliability of scores, particularly of pre-test scores of second-grade pupils which frequently fell "below the floor" of the test; and of non-random selection of students for testing which resulted in a base data of 34% of pupils in the program.

TABLE 13

Transitional Class Pupils' Mean Grade-Equivalent Scores on the 1979-1980 City-wide California Achievement Tests

Grade	Pupils with Pre- and Post-test Scores	June, 1979 Mean Score	April 1980 Mean Score	Months of Instruction	Mean Gain
2	1,253	1.5	2.3	8 months	8 months
3	1,221	2.0	2.9	8 months	9 months

TABLE 14

Rate of Progress in Reading for 1978-1979 and 1979-1980

Grade	Year	Rate of Progress Per Month	Year	Rate of Progress Per Month
2	1978-1979	.70 months	1979-1980	1.0 months
3	1978-1979	.77 months	1979-1980	1.12 months

Additionally, the scores of 231 second-grade pupils (12% of second-grade pupils with pre-test scores) and the scores of 957 third-grade pupils (53% of third-grade pupils with pre-test scores) were at

least two years below grade level at the beginning of the 1979-1980 school year. Therefore, it is not surprising that, at the end of the 1979-1980 school year, the reading test scores of 479 second-grade pupils (32% of second-grade pupils with post-test scores) and 646 third-grade pupils (48% of third-grade pupils with post-test scores) were still a year or more below grade level. It should not be expected that all pupils will respond equally well to any one program and few programs are implemented equally well in all classrooms. Given these factors and the severity of the lag with which many pupils began the year, it was predictable that not all pupils would have progressed to the desired achievement levels in one year of instruction. As teachers and district liaisons observed at the end of the 1978-1979 school year, some pupils may need more than one year of intervention in order to read at the desired level of competency.

Relation of Reading Gains to Program Descriptors. Reading gains were examined in relation to class size, single versus multiple grade organization of classes, primary language of pupils, mobility, attendance rate and proportion of holdovers in the class. Only class organization was found to be related to gains, with a statistically significant difference between the 9 month gain of single-grade classes and the 8 month gain of mutliple-grade classes*.

Reading Gains by District. Reading gains were also examined by district; the gains ranged from a high of 11 months in two districts to a low of 4 months in one district. Districts with the highest mean gains (of 10 or 11 months) included districts with high average scores and districts with low average scores for second and third grade pupils on the

*t (1220) = 2.8 p .01

1980 city-wide test. The district with the lowest mean gain is also a district which did not agree that these pupils should be removed from regular classes to a special environment for a year, did not distribute program guidelines and materials to the teachers, and did not hold staff development meetings.** The outcome for the district with the next lowest mean gain (of 5 months) was affected by a mean loss of 6 months in one class in the district. There are indications here that commitment to the program on part of the district and school adminstrators was important to the success of the program and that lack of commitment of the part of administrators may have had a negative effect on the success of the classes under their leadership.

Placement of Transitional Class Pupils At Discharge from the Program

Teachers were asked to report on the placement of pupils at discharge at the end of October, 1979; January and April, 1980; and at the end of the school year, June, 1980. Approximately 80% of the teachers submitted this information for the first three reporting periods; the rate of reporting fell to approximately 50% at the end of the year.

** The data for this district were questionable because of the number of pupils who did not take the June, 1979, pre-test. Therefore, before reporting these data, the average score of second and third-grade transitional class pupils in this district on the April, 1980, citywide post-test was compared to the average score of all second- and third-grade transitional class pupils. The average grade-equivalent score for this district's third-grade transitonal class pupils (N=21, or 70% of the 30 third-grade transitional class pupils in the district) was 2.8, virtually the same as the 2.9 for all third grade transitional class pupils. However, the average grade-equivalent score for this district's second-grade transitional class pupils (N=24, or 69% of the 35 second-grade transitional class pupils in the district) was 1.5, considerably lower than the 2.3 average score found for second-grade transitional class pupils throughout the program.

Information on placement was provided for a total of 4,681 pupils. Of these pupils, 658 transferred to other schools mid-year, 86 transferred to other classes on the same grade in the same school and 26 were promoted to classes on a higher grade mid-year. Of the pupils who were reported to have completed the year, 3,180 holdovers were promoted, 217 potential holdovers were promoted, and 202 potential holdovers were held over at the end of the year. Special education placement was reported for 312 pupils.

IV. FURTHER STUDY OF 45 CLASSES

Evaluation staff and program administrators expressed concern regarding the limited measures available to assess the impact of the program on pupil development. Promotion of pupils is not a good measure of this program's success since, under curent regulations, pupils who have been held over must be promoted. Reading gain scores reflect only a limited portion of the objectives set; attendance rates, while important, only indirectly reflect pupil and parental attitudes. In particular, it was believed that basic adjustment to school, a prerequisite to achievement and a necessary focus of the transitional class experience, was not being taken into account.

Furthermore, in 1978-1979, data on 102 transitional classes indicated that the program had been notably successful in selected sites. Detailed analysis of these 1978-1979 data confirmed that classes with high mean gains and classes with low mean gains had substantially different patterns of pupil growth in reading ability. Preliminary exploration of differences between the teachers of high and low gain classes in 1978-1979 indicated little difference in the method of teacher selection for the position, in academic credentials of the teachers or in their teaching experience. There were, however, indications that teacher ability to vary instructional methods to match pupils' needs and a strong oral language component in the curriculum were supportive of pupil growth in reading.

Therefore, in order to better assess the impact of the program and; at the same time, to identify effective classroom practices, in the Spring of 1980, program administrators were asked to identify "most effective" and "least effective" transitional classes for further study.

The criteria for selection included progress on all program objectives. The selections were based on previous classroom observations by program administrators. Thirty "most effective" and 15 "least effective" classes suggested by program administrators were visited by the evaluation staff.

The one-day visits included observations in the classroom and interviews with the transitional class teacher and the principal of the school. Checklists and sketches were used to record the physical characteristics of the classrooms. Instruments on which relevant categories were pre-coded were used to record the activities of the pupils and teachers at ten minute intervals throughout the day. Structured interviews were used to obtain information from teachers and principals regarding preparation for instruction, support for the program and participants' recommendations. Relevant data from questionaires completed by 29 district liaisons is also included in this section.

Description of the 45 Classes

Reading Gains of the 45 Classes. The mean gain in reading for the 45 classes was 9 months. The mean gains of the 30 "most effective" classes ranged from 5 months to 15 months with an overall mean gain for this group of classes of 10 months. The mean gains of the 15 "least effective" classes ranged from 3 months to 10 months with an overall mean gain for this group of 6 months. The difference in mean gains between the two groups was statistically significant (See Table 15) and supports the distinction between the classes made by the program administrators.

Composition of the 45 Classes. There were 745 pupils in the 45 classes; 7% in first grade, 49% in second grade, and 44% in third grade.

TABLE 15

Mean Gains of "Most Effective" and "Least Effective" Classes In Grade-Equivalent Scores				
Group	Mean Gains in months	S.D.	t	p
Most Effective	10.24	2.41	5.759	.01
Least Effective	5.75	2.04		

The average class size of both groups of classes in the sample was 17, the same average as that of all the transitional classes.

Combined-grade classes with first grade pupils were included in this group of 45 classes when more than 60% of the pupils in the class had taken the June, 1979, city-wide CAT test. The percentage of combined-grade classes in the sample was 56%, which is comparable to the proportion (52%) of combined-grade classes in the program. However, while precisely half of the "most effective" classes were formed by combining grades, two-thirds of the "least effective" classes were combined-grade classes. This finding along with the statistically significant difference between reading gains of single-grade and combined grades classes reported (in Section III, Program Assessment), appears to support district liaisons' recommendations that the number of combined-grade classes be reduced.

Pupil and Teacher Selection. Forty-four of the principals reported that pupils were selected on the basis of program guidelines; one principal stated that pupils were selected on the basis of individual needs. Forty-three principals said that they had selected the teachers on the basis of their previous experience. One principal of a teacher of a least effective class and one principal of a teacher of a most effective class said that this was the only teacher in the school who was willing to take

the assignment. Nonetheless, two-thirds of both groups of teachers stated that they had voluntarily accepted this teaching position for 1979-1980; this proportion is identical with principals' reports of the process of teacher selection throughout the program.

Pupil Characteristics. Primary language of the pupils in the 45 classes varied little from that of the entire group of transitional class pupils. English was the primary language of 72% of the pupils in the sample, Spanish was the primary language of 26%, and a variety of other languages were reported to be the primary language of the remaining 2%. The teachers of the 45 classes were also asked to report on the ethnicity of their pupils. According to these teacher reports, 423 (57%) of the pupils were black, 276 (37%) were hispanic and 46 (6%) were of other ethnic groups. Eighty-nine percent of the pupils in both groups of classes were holdovers, a slightly higher percentage than for the transitional classes over all.

Education of Teachers. The reported educational credentials of the two groups of teacher were similar. Twenty nine (64%) of the 45 teachers had completed graduate programs in education. Some difference was noted in the types of educational activities in which the teachers had participated during the past three years. Teachers of least effective classes were far more likely to have participated in in-services courses. Teachers of most effective classes were slightly more likely not to have participated in any educational activities but, when they had participated in such activities, they were more likely than teachers of least effective classes to have engaged in degree programs in education, or courses or programs not directed specifically to education. (See Table 16.)

TABLE 16

Current Participation of 45 Teachers in Educational Activities				
	Degree Programs in Education	Inservice Courses in Education	Other Courses and Programs	None
Teacher of most effecp tive classes (N=30)	9 (30%)	7 (23%)	9 (30%)	5 (17%)
Teacher of least effec- tive classes (N=15)	1 (7%)	11 (73%)	2 (13%)	1 (7%)

Experience Of Teachers. The years of teaching experience of the two groups of teachers were virtually identical. Fifteen of the 45 teachers (33%) had taught early childhood classes, reading or special education for eleven or more years, 14 teachers (31%) had taught in these areas for six to ten years and 16 teachers (36%) had taught in these areas for five years or less. These results are closely similar to the professional experience of teachers reported by principals for 1979-1980 and to the professional experience of 125 teachers reported in 1978-1979.

Parent-Teacher Communication. All 45 teachers reported face-to-face contact with the parents of their pupils as well as written communication and telephone conversations. Twenty-three teachers reported that they initiated these contacts, one teacher reported that parents initiated the contacts and 21 teachers reported that parents as well as the teachers initiated these contacts. These verbal reports were matched to documentation of parent-teacher contacts reported in Section II of this report; 39 of the 45 teachers had submitted documentation of these contacts.

Physical Characteristics of Classrooms. The physical characteristics of the 45 classrooms were generally found to be adequate. All 45 classes were orderly and the lighting was adequate in each. A very small number of problems were observed: the placement of one transitional class in a small office in a school which reportedly was being utilized at more than 100% of capacity, poor ventilation in four classrooms, and distracting noise from hallways or other classrooms which interfered with learning in five classes. These problems occurred in the classes that had been described as highly effective by the district liaisons.

The seating arrangements in the 45 classrooms were highly varied. Some classes held to a traditional row arrangement throughout the day. Some classrooms provided interest or subject centers in addition to more formal seating arrangements, and in several other classrooms, the seating arrangement was changed throughout the day. In some classrooms, desks were arranged into tables of 6 to 12 pupils; in others, the desks outlined three sides of a large square. All 45 classes were adequately supplied with blackboards, desks and chairs and basic instructional materials; however, more of the "most effective" classes were supplied with supplementary materials than were the "least effective" classes. (See Table 17.)

TABLE 17

Provision Of Supplementary Materials In 45 Classrooms

Type of Materials Present	"Most Effective" classrooms (N=30)	"Least Effective" classrooms (N=15)
Supplementary Reading Materials	26 (87%)	10 (67%)
Classroom Library	29 (97%)	11 (73%)
Audio-Visual	16 (53%)	7 (47%)
Realia*	19 (63%)	11 (73%)

*Realia means real-life objects used in classroom teaching.

Transitional Class Goals

Principals' Goals. When asked to state their primary goals for the transitional class, 42 of the 45 interviewed principals specified academic progress in reading and mathematics. Primarily, principals said they informed teachers of their goals directly (85%) and monitored adherance to their goals through classroom observations and review of weekly plan books. However, two principals of schools with most effective classes said that it was not necessary for them to monitor the transitional class teachers in their schools.

Teachers' Goals. Transitional class teachers differed from the principals in that, while 19 teachers (42%) said that academic progress was their primary goal, 26 teachers (58%) said that their primary goal for the year was to improve the pupils' self-concept. There were no differences between the two groups of teachers in this respect.

Observed Goals. Lessons and displays provided evidence that program goals were being addressed in the 45 classrooms. The largest difference between the two groups of classrooms was found in the more frequent use by pupils of classroom libraries in the most effective classes.

TABLE 18

Goals Observed to be Addressed in 45 Classrooms					
Groups of Classes	Critical Thinking and Problem Solving	Progress in Reading and Mathematics	Follow Directions and Work Independently	Self Concept	Pleasure in Reading (Use of Library)
Most Effective Classes (N=30)	12 (40%)	30 (100%)	27 (90%)	29 (97%)	25 (83%)
Least Effective Classes (N=15)	6 (40%)	15 (100%)	11 (73%)	12 (80%)	6 (40%)

(See Table 18.) The comprehension skills of critical thinking and problem solving were observed to be the least addressed of the goals set for the program.

Pupil Assessment

Initial Assessment. Twenty-four (53%) of the teachers said they used the assessment materials provided by the Central Board to determine pupil needs at the beginning of the school year, and seven (16%) said they used materials provided by the districts. (See Table 19.) The principals said the reverse; 21 (47%) of the principals said the teachers used assessment materials provided by the districts and 8 (18%) stated that the teachers used Central Board materials. This apparent contradiction may simply reflect the confusion in the field regarding sources of particular supports provided for the classes. The teachers of the most effective classes were more likely than the teachers of the least effective classes to have used the central office or district assessment materials; the teachers of the least effective classes were more likely than the teachers of the most effective classes to have used teacher-made assessments.

TABLE 19

Teachers' Reports On Pupil Assessment Used

	Central Board Assements	School Assessments	District Assessments	Teacher-made Assessments
Teacher of most effective classes (N=30)	18 (60%)	2 (7%)	4 (13%)	6 (20%)
Teachers of least effective classes (N=15)	6 (40%)	1 (7%)	3 (20%)	5 (33%)
Total (N=45)	24 53%	3 7%	7 16%	11 24%

Pupil Re-assessment. More teachers of the most effective classes (55%) reported continuous re-assessment of pupils' abilities than did teachers' of the least effective classes (20%). The two groups of teachers also differed in their reported use of information from pupil re-assessment. Assessment was apparently far more closely tied to planning for instruction among the teachers of the most effective classes than among the teachers of the least effective classes. (See Table 20.)

TABLE 20

Teacher Use of Re-assessment Information *			
	Re-assessment Used in Planning	Re-assessment Used to Check Progress	Re-assessment Used to Change Groups
Teacher of most effective classes (N=30)*	20 (67%)	9 (30%)	8 (26%)
Teacher of least effective classes (N=15*)	5 (33%)	7 (47%)	6 (40%)

*The data reflect multiple responses.

Planning For Instruction

School Plan for Teaching Reading. Although close to 85% of the principals and 60% of the teachers of both groups of classes stated that the schools were following a mandated district or school plan for teaching reading, evidence of such school or district plans was available in only 20% of both groups of schools. There was very little difference between groups in the ways the principals informed teachers of the mandated plan and monitored conformance to the plan: 77% of the principals said they informed the teachers directly; all of the principals said they monitored compliance through observations in the classrooms and review of plan

books. Close to 70% of both groups of principals said that the transitional class teachers followed the mandated plan.

Lesson Plans. All principals and teachers said that transitional class teachers submitted weekly plan books for review by the principal. Two-thirds of the princpals and teachers of both groups also noted that the transitional class teachers' plans were somewhat different from the plans of other teachers in the school. The primary reason given for these differences was that the transitional class pupils needed a modified instructional approach. However, transitional class teachers' lesson plans were available to be seen in only 50% of both groups of classes. The observed plans consistently contained objectives and related activities; only ten (40%) of the teachers of the most effective classes and two (13%) of the teachers of the least effective classes included evaluation measures in their written plans.

Instruction in the Transitional Classes

Program guidelines called for pupils to receive a concentrated, enriched curriculum emphasizing the development of basic reading, language arts and math skills. Teachers were given a minimum amount of direction as to the specific methodology to be employed in the program. The transitional class administrators expected that teachers would integrate the language experience approach with other familiar teaching methods, and teachers were encouraged to individualize instruction.

Classroom Organization. Although a particular pattern of organization for instruction was not mandated throughout the program, the purpose of reducing class size was to facilitate individualization of instruction. Combining grade levels within classes also implies that groups

of children may have differing educational needs and suggests the appropriateness of grouping for instruction. Guidelines for teacher selection included the teacher's demonstrated ability to vary classroom organization to match pupils' needs and 38 of the 45 principals reported that grouping patterns in the classrooms were in accordance with program intentions and guidelines. (See Table 21.)

TABLE 21

Principals' Reports of Classroom Organization Patterns					
	Individualized Instruction	Small Group Instruction	Flexible Groups	Whole Group	Organization Patterns Unknown
Most effective Classes (N=30)	6 (20%)	12 (40%)	8 (26%)	2 (7%)	2 (7%)
Least effective Classes (N=15)	4 (27%)	6 (40%)	2 (13%)	2 (13%)	1 (7%)
Total (N=45)	10 (22%)	18 (40%)	10 (22%)	4 (9%)	3 (7%)

Nonetheless, compilation of the data obtained from the timed-interval observations revealed that 62% of the instruction observed in the 45 classrooms was whole group instruction. (See Table 22.) Additionally, although incidental individual attention was observed throughout the classes, pupils were observed to work independently as the teacher gave individual instruction in only six of the most effective and three of the least effective classes and, in those nine classes, for only a minor portion of the day. These data suggest a significant disparity between central administrators' intentions and implementation by teachers on this variable. Among the questions raised by these data are the following: Did teachers change their organization of the class for the observation?

If not, can and should central administrators determine such program policy? If yes, how can these administrators support implementation of such policy?

TABLE 22

Classroom Organization Patterns Observed			
	Individualized Instruction	Small Group Instruction	Whole Group Instruction
Most effective Classes (N=30)	6% of observed time	34% of observed time	60% of observed time
Least effective Classes (N=15)	4% of observed time	31% of observed time	65% of observed time
Total (N=45)	5% of observed time	33% of observed time	62% of observed time

Proportion of Time Spent in Reading and Language Arts Instruction. Compiled data from timed-interval observations also revealed that the average proportion of time spent on reading or language arts instruction in the least effective classes was 53% with a range of 31% to 73%. The average proportion of time spent on reading and language arts instruction in the most effective classes was 61% with a range of 28% to 100%. In eight (27%) of the most effective classrooms, more that 75% of instructional time was given to reading and language arts. While these data are not conclusive, they do suggest that proportion of class time devoted to specific objectives is related to pupil achievement of those objectives.

Pupil Attention to Instruction. Counts were made of the number of pupils attending to instruction in the middle of each 10 minute interval during the observed day. Pupils counted as attending to instruction were all those who were engaged in an activity which appeared to be related to instruction. Pupils counted as not attending were all those who were

sitting with their heads down, wandering or looking around the room, or engaged in conversation not related to class work. Overall, an average of 90% of the pupils were attending to learning activities at any given observation. Attention to instruction was not different for the two groups of classes nor did attention vary with classroom organization patterns. This consistently high rate of pupil attentiveness throughout an entire day is, in itself, a commendable finding and an indicator of program success.

Methods of Teaching Reading Employed in Transitional Classes. A specific method for teaching reading was not mandated for the program but program administrators intended that alternatives to the basal reader/phonics approach would be employed. Teachers were to have been selected who had knowledge of a variety of teaching resources and teachers were particularly encouraged to use a language experience approach. To support the use of this method in the classroom, staff development workshops were provided which presented ways to teach reading through language experiences. Data on transitional classes in 1978-1979 indicated that teacher flexibility in instruction and a strong oral language component were helpful to transitional class pupils in learning to read.

In 1979-1980, the teachers of the 45 classes and the principals of the 45 schools were asked to describe the method or methods used to teach reading in the transitional classes. Observations of methods employed were also made in each of the classrooms. Response to questions and observation of methods employed were coded as "basal" if basal reader or basal reader and phonics approaches were stated or observed. Responses and observations were coded as "phonics" if only phonics instruction was mentioned or observed and, similarly, "language experience" was coded if

only language experience was mentioned or observed. Responses and observations were coded as "eclectic" if language experience along with basal reader and/or phonics and sight word approaches were mentioned or observed.

While 67% of the teachers of the most effective classes and 47% of the teachers of the least effective classes stated that they used a language experience or eclectic approach in teaching reading in the transitional classes, these statements were matched by observations only for the most effective classrooms. (See Tables 23 and 24.) Language experience combined with other approaches was observed in only two of the least effective classrooms.

TABLE 23

45 Teachers' Reports of Methods of Teaching Reading		
	Basal or Phonics	Language Experience or Exlectic
Most effective classes (N=30)	10 (33%)	20 (67%)
Least effective classes (N=15)	8 (53%)	7 (47%)
Totals (N=45)	18 (40%)	27 (60%)

TABLE 24

Methods of Teaching Reading Observed In 45 Classes		
	Basal or Phonics	Language Experience or Eclectic
Most effective classes (N=30)	11 (37%)	19 (63%)
Least effective classes (N=15)	13 (87%)	2 (13%)
Totals (N=45)	24 (53%)	21 (47%)

Principals' reports of methods employed to teach reading match teacher reports for only nine (30%) of the most effective classes and ten (67%) of the least effective classes; four principals of schools with most effective classes and two principals of schools with least effective classes stated that they didn't know what methods the teachers were using to teach reading. The match of principals' reports with methods observed was very low: for the most effective classes only twelve principals' statements (40%) matched the methods observed in the classrooms; for the least effective classrooms, only five principals' statements (33%) matched the methods observed.

The classroom observations appear to confirm the value of the teachers' ability to employ various instructional methods to teach reading and of the language experience approach to teaching reading in the transitional classes. The poor match between verbal reports and observations is subject to various interpretations. This poor match may reflect the lack of reliability in verbal reports and support the practice of observation in research on classrooms variables; it may also reflect the limitations of one-day observations and suggest the need for repeated observations to obtain more reliable data. The poor match may, again, indicate a disparity in the Transitional Class Program between administrators' intentions and classroom implementation. The extremely poor match between principals' reports and classroom observations may be related to the ambiguity of the school administrators' role in the program. Whereas other administrative roles in the program were defined, the school administrator's role beyond teacher and pupil selection was not. Principals may have interpreted this omission as a discharge from direct responsibility for supervision of the Transitional Classes. To the extent that this is true, teachers may have

received very little supervision in the districts in which liaisons did not visit classrooms with regularity.

Support for Transitional Classes

Principals' Support. When asked how they supported the transitional class teachers, principals said little to indicate that they understood and supported the program guidelines or gave support in instructional matters. They tended to see their support of the program as administrative and as provision of materials for the classrooms. District liaisons agreed with the principals' assessment of their administrative support, but gave the principals more credit for support of guidelines and instructional support and less credit for provision of materials. (See Table 25.)

TABLE 25

	Principals' Support of the Classes*			
	Guidelines	Administrative	Instructional	Materials
Principals' View (N=45)	7 (16%)	28 (62%)	15 (33%)	29 (64%)
Dist. Liaisons' View (N=29)	13 (45%)	20 (69%)	20 (69%)	11 (38%)

*The data reflect multiple responses.

The 45 teachers agreed that the principals' support was primarily administrative. The teachers of the least effective classes gave the principals more credit for support in each of the categories than did the teachers of the most effective classes. (See Table 26.) It is not clear whether this reflects a difference in levels of support given by principals or a difference in teachers' awareness of support.

TABLE 26

Teachers' View of Principals' Support*				
	Guidelines	Administrative	Instructional	Materials
Teachers of most effective classes (N=30)	3 (10%)	14 (47%)	4 (13%)	9 (30%)
Teachers of least effective classes (N=15)	3 (20%)	11 (73%)	3 (20%)	8 (53%)
TOTAL (N=45)	6 (13%)	25 (56%)	7 (16%)	17 (38%)

*The data reflect multiple responses.

District Support. Principals and teachers said that the districts provided teachers with administrative support and materials and assisted teachers in instructional matters through workshops. (See Table 27 and 28.) The principals of schools with least effective classes particularly stressed the instructional support given by the district; the district liaisons particularly stressed the workshops and materials provided on the district level.

TABLE 27

Principals' View of District Support of The Program*				
	Guidelines	Administrative	Instructional	Materials
Principals of most effective classes (N=30)	2 (7%)	18 (60%)	18 (60%)	12 (40%)
Principals of least effective classes (N=15)	0 (0%)	5 (33%)	13 (87%)	5 (33%)
Total (N=45)	2 (4%)	23 (51%)	31 (69%)	17 (40%)

*The data reflect multiple responses.

TABLE 28

Teachers' View of District Support *				
	Guidelines	Administrative	Instructional	Materials
Teachers Who experienced support from districts (N=45)	3 (7%)	15 (33%)	28 (62%)	20 (44%)

*The data reflect mulitple responses.

All but five of the teachers of the most effective classes, and one teacher of a least effective class who received no training, found the staff development meetings provided by the districts to be of value. (See Table 29.) The teachers of least effective classes particularly valued the opportunity provided to exchange ideas.

TABLE 29

Teachers' Reports of the Value of Staff Development						
	Enhanced Skills Related to Program Goals	Enhanced Skills Not Related to Program Goals	Learned New Techniques	Opportunity to Exchange Ideas	No Value	No Meeting
Teacher of most effective classes (N=30)	7 (23%)	7 (23%)	4 (14%)	7 (23%)	5 (17%)	0
Teacher of least effective classes (N=15)	4 (27%)	1 (7%)	2 (13%)	7 (46%)	0	1 (7%)

Central Support. Despite the fact that, in addition to the basic provision of the classes, the central office provided guidelines, program materials, and quarterly publications for teachers and for parents, arranged

workshops in several districts, arranged for support services and provided a small amount of classroom materials, the principals and the teachers expressed very little awareness of any support for the program from the central office, apparently thinking that the support they received from the central office was coming from the districts. (See Table 30.) Only the district liaisons articulated awareness of these contributions of the central office. Twenty (69%) of the district liaisons accurately specified these contributions and seven (24%) noted some of these contributions. The liaison who never attended district liaison meetings was one of two liaisons who did not recognize any central office support. Both of these liaisons represented districts which did not agree with and did not always follow program guidelines.

TABLE 30

Central Office Support of the Program				
	Guide-lines	Adminis-tive	Instruc-tional	Materials
Principals who were aware of central office support (N=45)	3 (7%)	4 (9%)	2 (4%)	6 (13%)
Teachers who were aware of central office support (N=45)	1 (2%)	2 (4%)	8 (18%)	8 (18%)

Additional Support Needed. The 45 teachers were asked what additional support was needed from the principals, the districts and the central office. Thirty (67%) asked for additional materials, seven (24%) asked for better monitoring of the program by the central administrators, eight (18%) asked that the principals allow them to participate in student selection for the classes and six (13%) asked for more training. With the exception of better monitoring of the program by the central adminis-

trators and sharing in pupil selection with principals, considerable confusion appeared to exist among teachers as to the appropriate administrative source of particular supports.

Additional Services

The central administrators set policy with respect to additional services the transitional class pupils were to receive: the only service for which pupils were to be "pulled-out" individually or in small groups was ESL instruction. The entire class could go with the teacher to reading or mathematics programs. Under no circumstances were transitional class pupils to be in the Resource Room Program, a program for learning disabled children. If children were identified as pupils in need of Resource Room services, they were to be removed from the Transitional Class Program. A memorandum to this effect was sent to all district superintendents and all district liaisons.

Nevertheless, some teachers and principals reported that transitional class pupils were receiving each of these services (Table 31) and small groups of children were observed leaving the classrooms for periods of 45 minutes at a time in one least-effective and eight most-effective classrooms.* Five district liaisons also reported that the districts were not in compliance with the policy of excluding pupils eligible for Resource Room services from the transitional classes. Other teachers, principals and district liaisons expressed their disagreement with this policy while reporting that their classes were in compliance. This disagreement with

*The observed difference between the two groups of classes may reflect greater personal security on the part of the teachers of the most effective classes and their consequent willingness to retain the normal schedule while the class was being observed.

program policy reflects continuing controversy over pupil selection guidelines. Although principals reported that pupil selection was based on the program guidelines, pupils in need of special education services were apparently placed in the program in 1979-1980 as they had been in 1978-1979. Perhaps the most distressing aspect of this controversy in the disrespect which is engendered, symbolized by the behavior of one group of teachers who, it was reported, "tore up our copies of that memorandum and threw them in the waste-paper basket."

TABLE 31

Additional Services Received By Transitional Class Pupils				
	E.S.L. (approved)	Individual Services (approved)	Federally-funded Reading Program (sometimes approved)	Resource Room (not approved)
Teacher Reports (N=45)	3 (7%)	9 (20%)	12 (27%)	10 (22%)
Principal Reports (N=45)	7 (16%)	1 (2%)	13 (29%)	6 (13%)

Participants' Recommendations

Program Continuance. Twenty-eight district liaisons, 44 principals and 44 teachers recommended the continuation of the program because of its benefit to the transitional class pupils. Eleven principals also recommended that the program be continued because of its benefits beyond the classrooms to the schools in which these classes were placed. Only one district liaison, one principal and one teacher recommended that the program should not be continued; the district liaison because pupils were removed from regular classes, the principal because reducing class size in the transitional class was perceived as unfair to other teachers and pupils,

and the teacher because she believed her pupils were misplaced and would have been better served by special education placements. Four district liaisons, 14 principals and 8 teachers urged expansion of the program.

Recommended Changes. Twenty district liaisons, 36 principals and 37 teachers suggested a variety of changes that they felt would improve the program. Fourteen district liaisons recommended additional funding for materials and social services, 11 district liaisons recommended additional funding for teacher coverage while teachers attended workshops and 13 liaisons recommended the inclusion of students in need of special education services. Thirteen principals recommended increased funding for teacher coverage and six principals recommended the inclusion of students in need of special education. Four principals also recommended that transitional class pupils be allowed to use other services while participating in the program. Sixteen teachers recommended that students who were in need of special education services should, in fact, be excluded from the program, (suggesting that, in their schools, these pupils were included). Seven teachers concurred with liaisons' and principals' recommendations of increased funding for materials and increased funding to support teacher training.

The implications of the suggestions concerning pupil selection are disturbing. Questions are raised as to the ability of the central administrators to institute citywide programs for selected groups of pupils without firm central monitoring. In addition, if there were significant numbers of pupils in need of special education services in the Transitional Class Program, these pupils may not have received the appropriate services.

Suggestions for Staff Development. District liaisons, principals and teachers saw the need for further staff development directed to implementation of program objectives. The district liaisons and principals, partcularly, saw the need for furthering teachers' ability to organize and control the classrooms; one-third of each group of participants saw the need for more training with respect to teaching reading; and liaisons were particularly aware of the need to address implementation of other program objectives. Twelve liaisons (39%), nine principals (20%) and seven teachers (16%) suggested that knowledge of special education techniques would be helpful to teachers in meeting the needs of transitional class pupils. Again, the discrepancy between central administrators' intentions and implementation is suggested by these findings.

V. EVALUATION COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Comments on the Transitional Class Program

The administrators and teachers of the Transitional Class Program should be commended for the enthusiasm, co-operation and speed with which this centrally-organized program was implemented in a decentralized school system and for the wide political support which was engendered in constituent groups. Administrators are also to be commended for their responsiveness to suggestions from teachers, parents and advisory groups for strengthening the program during its two years of operation. The program became far more unified, more coherent and more effective in 1979-1980 as a result of this communication. Data for 1979-1980 suggest that the transitional class experience resulted in improvement in the pupils' ability to work profitably in classrooms and in an increased rate of the pupils' growth in reading ability, particularly in those classes in which program policies were fully implemented.

It appears that the guidelines established for the program were basically sound; however, it also appears that these guidelines were not followed uniformly throughout the program. Although teachers were to have been selected on the basis of prior successful experience teaching slow-learning primary-grade pupils, a substantial number of teachers in the program did not have this background and may not have had the skills expected of them. Additionally, pupils in need of special education appear to have been placed in the program despite guidelines for pupil selection which prohibited their inclusion. These findings indicate the need for closer monitoring for conformance to program guidelines than was anticipated by central administrators.

Specific criteria for program success were not stated in advance of the program. As a result, unstated expectations tended to be unrealistically high. The achievement of pupils such as these should be assessed in relation to their previous records and not in relation to national or even local norms. The length of time that it takes for a pupil to reach grade level depends both on this rate of growth and how far the child has fallen behind. It follows that not all pupils will be able to leave a program such as this at the same time and continue to succeed. This possibility should be anticipated and provision should be made for children who need more time.

There is little reason to doubt the sincerity of the teachers' and liaisons' reports of the positive impact of the program on the pupils' adjustment to school, self-esteem, ability to learn, and progress on other program goals. Unfortunately, it was difficult to document this reported progress in the absence of appropriate instruments. This is not only unfortunate for all participants in the program but also for those who look to the Transitional Class Program experience for guidance in establishing similar programs.

With respect to the organization of the program, most responsibilities were effectively delineated in 1979-1980. However, the locus of responsibility for day-to-day supervisory support of the transitional classes was not clearly established. It was assumed that the locus of this responsibility would be established within districts. The result was that, while some transitional class teachers were provided this support by principals and/or by district liaisons, other transitional class teachers were not. Better day-to-day supervision throughout the program could

have resulted in the identification of problems such as the reliance in many classrooms on whole group instruction and basal reader lessons, and appropriate interventions such as needed materials or specific training could have been provided to raise the level of all classes to high effectiveness.

Implications for Future Programs.

The qualified success of the Transitional Class Program, along with the problems that were experienced and the disparities between intentions and implementation that became apparent, can provide useful information to district administrators who are continuing the program and to central administrators who are designing programs to meet the needs of simular students. Basically, the experience of this program demonstrates that centrally-organized programs designed for special groups are viable when certain basic elements are present. Conversely, the absence of these elements precludes program success.

Central administrators can and should make policy decisions about centrally-funded programs for special groups of pupils citywide. In addition, the disparities between intentions and implementation observed in the Transitional Class Program suggest the need for optimal clarity in stated policy and for control over implementation. If central administrators are to implement a program city-wide that is consistent with program intentions, it is imperative that time be provided for a period of planning during which all facets of program policy are clearly delineated, preferably in consultation with potential users. Because there is no one clearly superior model for special programs for low-achieving pupils, it would also be helpful to develop more than one appropriate model from

among which choices can be made by users. Once the choice is made, however, implementation should adhere to guidelines. Modifications should be made only on a program-wide basis and should be based on program outcomes. This last recommendation is particularly important if models will be established and then turned over to participants to perpetuate. Clarity of models is essential for programs to continue to have impact once the initial impetus is removed.

It is important to expend time and effort during the planning period in formulating specific program policies so that the relevance, uses, and requirements of the model (or models) are clear. Attainable and measurable objectives for the program should be established. The student population should be clearly defined and methods for assessing every student's level of attainment on the specified objectives should be determined. Teacher selection criteria should be established. The roles and responsiblities of teachers and all administrators should be clearly stated. All responsibilities should be delineated.

Policy should be set for the frequency with which every pupil will be assessed on each of the program objectives. At a minimum, pre- and post-assessment of all pupils on all salient objectives should be mandated. Periodic re-assessment during the program is also recommended in order to identify pupils who are not making adequate progress and to guide teachers in modifying individual pupils' programs to ensure that each pupil is receiving the instruction that meets his or her needs.

Appropriate strategies should be identifed for all aspects of instruction including methods of planning, curriculum areas to be emphasized, useful classroom organization patterns and teaching methods, and

materials to be employed. Guidelines should be prepared which reflect all the policy determinations that are made.

A further stage of preparation for implementation is suggested. Staff development for teachers and all administrators connected with the program should be conducted in order to introduce the participants to the program guidelines and to ensure that all participants understand, accept and can implement program policies. Supervision, including observation, should follow staff development. It is all too commonly found that what people think they do differs from that which they are observed to do. Teachers, for example, need to observe themselves more accurately. They also need the opportunity to observe other teachers and to be supportively observed by supervisors on a routine basis.

If the program is to be consistently implemented, the central administrators should provide the staff needed to monitor all aspects of program implementation for conformance to minimum standards. Schools and districts whose programs are not found in conformance to minimum standards should not retain central support of their programs. The key concept that is being suggested is accountability at all levels of program participation. Only with such accountability can central administrators ensure that the pupils in need of special programs are, in fact, receiving the services intended and, in addition, be able systematically to determine the efficacy of the services.